

Qamar Jay Yochanan

Development Professional Profile



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Introduction

I'm not for everyone, but I might be for you

The pandemic opened a floodgate of mutual aid consciousness that has made it difficult for some organizations to continue to connect. The old modalities of a disembodied give downward aren't clicking. People want to feel more connected to their giving, the projects they're giving to, and the people stewarding their gifts. With my combination background of philanthropy, nonprofit fundraising, theater, and grassroots mutual aid work, I'm equipped to thrive in this new era of unprecedented authenticity. Here's part of why:

My fundraising philosophy is rooted in a Jewish concept called *tikun olaam*. It is the process by which the world is restored spiritually through demonstrable acts of justice. Additionally, I'm a Black, queer-trans, and anti-zionist/pro-palestinian Jew and a nationally recognized organizer. It's from those identities that I draw my sense of purpose in applying a solidarity approach to donor relations. My commitment is to serve, strengthen, and secure marginalized communities in an authentic and embodied context.

Thriving as a creative collaborator and being unafraid of taking calculated risks has propelled my success in donor management, cross-sector relationship cultivation, and multimedia storytelling. My journey has prepared me to embrace new challenges and contribute my unique perspective, working alongside like-minded individuals who share a passion for making a difference. I'm dedicated to meaningful change and hoping to find new avenues of expression and impact. With an unwavering commitment to advancing justice and equity, I look forward to contributing my skills and passion to an organization that shares these values. In my next opportunity, I don't just want to work for an organization, I want a group of brilliant professional partners with which to organize.

Professional Background

Throughout my career, I have consistently harnessed my passion for donor management and development to make a meaningful impact. My professional beginnings were as a humble administrative assistant for the Saint Paul and Minnesota Community Foundation, which gives away millions annually through hundreds of donor advised funds in collaboration with dedicated advisory councils. I was truly thrown into the deep end—I worked daily across two standard Blackbaud databases and one custom, read impact statements and reports from the organizations we funded, connected with community leaders, supported program officers, and assisted no less than four managers and one VP in logistics.

As I quietly cleaned up lunches I listened to these important people debate and give away all this money. It ignited a spark in me.

I went on to become a Gifts Officer at Books For Africa, a platinum-rated non-profit with \$25 million in assets, securing donations ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000 with a 30+ year history. After that, I began to work more in database contracting so that I could work better with technology as infrastructure.

During the pandemic, my talent and passion began to really manifest at a level I couldn't have imagined. I orchestrated a successful fundraising initiative, resulting in \$30,000 USD funds raised for the TC Black Trans + Indigenous Two Spirit Artist Fund. I knew from my time serving on the boards for the Minneapolis Transgender Equity Council and the Minneapolis Arts Commission that these particular groups would endure excessive hardship. I spearheaded the endeavor myself and partnered with Twin Cities Logistics Collective, Take ActionMN, the City of Minneapolis, and many individual community stake-holders in order to achieve a wide reach and excellent results. Our first two artists had their funding on the first day. It not only demonstrated my creative collaboration skills but also showcased my commitment to advancing social justice and equity. As fundraising consultant, I created impactful GoFundMe campaigns for underserved clients, most recently achieving an impressive 50% funding within a few days.

My ability to craft bespoke fundraising copy and peer-to-peer fundraising guides has empowered individuals from underserved communities to achieve their financial goals and drive positive change.

My language proficiencies in French and Hebrew, along with certifications in Java, Python, and SQL for Data Analysis, enable me to effectively communicate and analyze data, a vital asset in fundraising and relationship building. My experiences and accolades, such as being recognized by the Marsha P. Johnson Institute, and winning a place in the [AFP-MN IDEA Fellowship](#), underscore my dedication to meaningful change and advocacy within the nonprofit landscape and beyond.

Fundraising Philosophy

“And Rabbi Elazar said: Anyone who performs [mutual aid] is considered as though [they] filled the whole world in its entirety with kindness.”

-Sukkah 49b:12

There’s so much that can be said about fundraising. My personal take is that it’s an ancestral medicinal practice that works to assist both the receiver and the giver with the chronic pain of injustice. It’s not something we can completely eradicate from the world as we know it, but it’s something we can take part in alleviating for one another.

When it comes to managing donors, I’m known for lifting the act of giving from one of a transaction and rooting the conversation in sacred reciprocity.

One of my high profile donors is an amazing human being named Harry Waters Jr. If his name sounds familiar, it’s because he was in *Back to the Future* and part of the original cast of the legendary Broadway play *Angels in America*, written by Jewish playwright Tony Kushner. Harry follows me from project to project, sometimes giving donations in the five figures. When I asked Harry what inspired his trust in me as a fundraiser, he wrote:

“Context context, context. There are marketing schemes that are often overwhelming. However, the connections within and around communities that matter tend to drive my interest and demand (internally) response.”

I take a lot of pride in that. It’s a given with me that any and all projects I contribute to are authentic and centered in connection. Poverty, struggle, and injustice are more than monetary deprivation. They come from a stripping away of identity and security.

Addressing these issues can’t ever be reduced to just a dollar amount. In my work, I passionately draw donors into self-realization and self-recognition through giving.

I achieve and excel because every goal is grounded in relationship. The kindness we create from this practice of giving is really holding dear and near to context.

Strategic Praxis

Creating successful partnerships requires a strategic and thoughtful approach. Here are some strategies I employ to establish and nurture trust in donor and other community partnerships:

Long-Term Relationship Presencing: I think all of us are exhausted by the transactional nature of our culture. I focus on building strong and lasting relationships with partners first. Oftentimes, I've not made a direct ask at all and I walk away with a significant upgrade.

Personalized Outreach & Recognition: This is where I really excel. I craft tailored and compelling communication using storytelling that highlights the mutual benefits of partnership. Tiered recognition can be valuable, but donors need to feel that the stewardship is top tier no matter their give.

Measurement and Reporting: I establish clear metrics and benchmarks to measure the outcomes and impact of the partnership. I regularly provide easy to access reports and data that demonstrate how their support is making a difference. I'm also a big process nerd and data hygiene lover.

Office Hours, Virtual Visits, In Person Events: I create and support multiple opportunities to check back with partners and I love to meet people as they are. I go out of my way to engage in ways that are culturally specific. This has led to incredible conversations, inspiration, and partner realization that can't be uncovered solely in traditional formats..

Adaptability and Flexibility: As a true collaborator, I'm open to adjusting our strategies based on the evolving needs and preferences of our partners. I listen to their feedback and be willing to pivot to ensure a mutually beneficial partnership.

Connection & Story-Gathering: Communication and storytelling are a great and basic place to start. But many people can communicate and everyone has a story. It's fostering a true connection and the ability to gather stories where relationships arrive at complex. I regularly check in, provide updates, and address any concerns to ensure a strong and sustainable partnership. But I'm also adept at creating spaces in copy for donors to give a response. I also get out in the community to be with those we're serving.

Outreach Examples

FY24 Q3 RENEWAL

Dear [NAME],

When it comes to ending MS, we're not fighting a fair fight. It's an invisible villain and the battlefield is the body. Part of what your incredible support of [MARKET NAME] has done is ensure that none of us are in it to win it alone. On behalf of the Society, I thank you for your support, and I'm not the only one grateful to you:

Over the last four months, we were able to connect with 40,000 new people for the first time.

That's 40,000 new friends, neighbors, and allies in this cause. Our goal for this year is 410,000 and we know it's ambitious. But we have no idea who among us will have the key to a cure. Every day, we're working to reach out and rally as many as possible on the pathway to finding one.

We've also completed phase one of our mapping project of MS specialists and other neurologists across the country. Everyone deserves quality support that they can access from wherever they happen to be. You don't have to know the veteran in rural Idaho to be proud that you helped him close the gap between his kitchen table and his MS care team.

We hope you can renew your gift of [XXXX]today and continue your impact on [MARKET NAME/LINK]

Research may be the engine of the future, but relationships are driving us down the road, so let me ask you: Do you feel supported in your relationship with us? Do you have what you need in your MS toolbox to create the life you want? Please be in touch to answer those questions or ask any of your own. This is not about transaction; this is about reciprocity. Your dollar investment is important, but it's your presence in the movement to end MS that truly matters.

Many Thanks,

Qamar

FY24 Give to the Max Day Script

Hi <> this is <> from the National MS Society Happy Give to the Max Day! I'm calling to thank you for your support in the past and say that if you're interested in contributing this year at any amount, we will be entered into a drawing for a between \$500-10K match. Meaning your impact on the Society could be far greater than your investment. Also, Minnesota is set to buck the national downtrend in giving. So today is our special day to show the rest of the country what it really means to be Minnesota nice. Either way, I'm grateful you're a part of this community. Truly, thank you.

Client Strategy Guide

To view a custom strategy document that I crafted for a client as an independent fundraising consultant, [click here](#).

Thank You for Reading

Thank you for taking the time to delve into this profile and gain a deeper understanding of my remarkable journey as a development professional. Should you require further information about my arts and/or activism, please visit yoqamar.com, or please reach out.

Warm regards,

Qamar Yochanan (they/them)

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